



## Open Arms by Ukume94

**Series:** [Back To The Future \[10\]](#)

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** F/M

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers, Scott Clarke, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2021-07-23

**Updated:** 2021-07-23

**Packaged:** 2022-03-31 10:29:31

**Rating:** Teen And Up Audiences

**Warnings:** Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 2,508

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

## Open Arms



Joyce sits against her car listening to the muffled music coming from the gymnasium.

Will had been gushing about the Winter Snowball dance, even asking her to teach him how to dance in case he gets a girl to dance with him.

When she dropped him off he asked her for some space, of course she agreed but never told him how much space.

Her eyes are directed towards the cement ground, her mind racing

and thinking about the horrors Will had to deal with for a second time. She could still feel the heat within Hopper's cabin, she could smell the blood coming from the lab and she could still see Bob. She bites her bottom lip.  
Bob.

She lost him, watched him die in front of her when he was just inches away from the doors. If it weren't from Hopper pulling her back and out of the lab.

Joyce tries to think if something that won't make her burst into tears.

The sound of footsteps approaching her makes her turn her head. She notices Hopper making his way towards her.

"Hey." He says stopping a foot away from her.

"Hey." She answers back, she eyes him wondering why he was here with her in the parking lot of their old middle school.  
Did he bring So to the dance so she could experience what it's like?

"Thought I might find you here."

"Will wanted space, so... I gave him a few feet." She answers with a scoff.

He pulls out his box of cigarette's and taps the with him finger.

"Whaddaya say? I'm pretty sure Mister Cooper retired in the 70's." He says looking around the parking lot to see if the coast was clear from any bossy teachers. He places the tabacoo stick in between his lips and walks over to her side. "So... We might be okay." He adds lighting up the stick and looking around once again as he takes a puff.

Joyce watches him with a smirk, she knew he was trying to get her to smile and it was working.

He hands her the cigarette still looking around.

"Gimme that." She sighs before taking the stick and placing it in between her lips. She needed to calm her nerves down. She taks a puff and grimaced at the taste. Glancing up towards Hopper in disgust of his kind of tabacoo flavor, she looks away handing him the

cigarette and coughs letting out the smoke.

He smiles again knowing she's always done that since the first day they first shared a cigarette.

He looks down to her and notices her filled with sadness and hurt. She was trying to hide it but he could see right through her.

"How you holding up?" He asks watching the glowing end of the cigarette.

She could feel her heart breaking as she begins to think about Bob again. Hopper saved her, he sat with her inside her room the night Bob was killed. He knew she needed someone to be with her and keep her company during her tough time.

"You know." She answers placing her fingers onto her lips when she gets a piece of the tabaccoo in her mouth.

"Yeah, that feeling never goes away." He takes another drag of the cigarette.

She knew it was going to be hard but when was she going to learn to accept the loss?

"It is true what they say you know." He breaths out the smoke from his lungs. "Everyday it does get a little easier." He finishes passing the cigarette towards her.

She eyes him feeling the pain of the loss, the flashes of his death replaying over and over again. She takes a drag and knew she was gonna cry, it was burning at her eyes. She glances towards him again knowing he'd understand.

Hopper notices her tear filled eyes and pulls her to him, his arm wrapping around her shoulders. She rests her head upon his shoulder and lets the wave of emotion pull her in. She silently cries against him, knowing he wouldn't judge her.

He rests his head upon the top of her head, gently kissing her hair he wants her to know she'll be okay. He wants her to know even though she's in pain he would always be here for her. He would never leave her.

She uses her other hand to hold his hand against her arm, she needed to feel closer to someone who understood her pain in losing

someone.

He moves his head away from her head and looks to the trees ahead of them, he wants to give her the privacy she needs even if she was in his arms.

They stand like that until the sound of the backdoor to the gymnasium opens, the loud music echoing the parking lot around them.

Hopper and Joyce pull away from each others hold not wanting their small town to start gossiping about seeing them together.

They let out a sigh of relief when they find the person that walked out was Scott Clarke.

"Good evening Ms. Byers, Chief Hopper." He smiles towards them as he walks towards his car and grabs two gallons of juice. He walks back towards them with a smile.

"It's a very peaceful and calm night." He says looking around the area and sighing. He gestures towards the drinks in his hands. "The kiddos sure do like the juice." He shrugs. "Better get back in there before they start licking the bowl in there." She chuckles.

They chuckle along with him. Mr. Clarke begins to walk back to the gymnasium when Joyce clears her throat.

"Uh Scott." She says.

He stops and turns.

Jim and Scott both look to her as she tries to find the words.

"Uh, is Will enjoying himself?" She finally asks and wanting to make sure her son was having fun and not disliking the dance.

"Oh you bet, he's been dancing with Jennifer Ward for sometime now." He answers with a smile.

"Oh good." She smiles back.

"Well have a good time you two." He smiles before heading back into

the gymnasium.

"You hear that, Will's having a good time." Hopper says looking to Joyce.

"I know. I was so afraid those kids in there would treat him like he has the plague. I even thought some of those bitches in there would make fun of him and continue calling him those names." She smiles feeling a fresh batch of happy tears begin to escape onto her cheeks.

"Some of the kids are calling him names?" Hopper asks.

"Yeah, I guess some of them are calling him a freak, and their favorite Zombie boy." She shakes her head.

"Let me fix it, tell me which one they are and I'll talk to their parents."

"Get in line Hop, I've told him to tell me who they are cause I'll finish those bitches myself."

"Easy, mamma bear." He smiles.

"Believe me Hop, when your kid becomes the joke around school and town you'll get those claws too." She says looking to Hopper then realizing she stuck her foot in her mouth. She turns to look at Hopper and apologize.

He must have seen the look she gave him because he blew it off.

"Hey well, it's gonna happen. El is my daughter now. I adopted her."

"How?" She asks.

"Dr. Owens figured out a way." He looks to her with a smile playing on his face.

Joyce smiles towards him.

"I'm happy for you Hop, look at you becoming a father over night."

"Yeah I know. Maybe I'll have better luck this time around." He shrugs lighting up another cigarette.

"Hey." She shakes her head. "Don't do that." Joyce touches his hand. He looks to her, his eyes watching her smaller frame.

"What happened the first time was not your fault." She says grabbing ahold of his hand.

"I bet you were a great dad the first time." She says rubbing her thumb against his hand.

"I was, I'll be better this time around. She's my daughter now and I'll make sure she's protected." He answers taking a drag of the cigarette.

"I know you'll do good with her Hop. Just don't be rough or get angry so fast. Take deep breaths and listen." She explains, silently asking for the cigarette he hand it to her. She takes a drag of the cigarette and smirks.

"I know I wish my dad would have." She coughs again.

"You mean when it came to me?" He asks with a smile and his amusement in watching her cough.

"Yeah, he flipped out when he found out we were skipping class to smoke." She smiles reminiscing about the good old days.

"How did he used to say it?" He asks laughing thinking about how he sounded when he spoke.

"Right hold on." She takes a deep breath. "Joycie, you need to keep away from that boy. He's no good for ya and is just gonna drag ya down. First it's gonna be your grade, then what? Is it gonna be your clothes?" She says trying to imitate his voice by deepening her own. She lets put a laugh with Hopper.

He smiles down towards her, grabbing the cigarette from her he takes a drag.

"Speaking of changing clothes, did you see El's outfit dhe had on that night?" He asks.

"I did. It was-"

"Bitchin' she called it bitchin'." He says eyeing her.

Joyce giggles. "It's already too late Hop, looks like she's starting to branch out."



"I sure hope not, I want her to still be a kid when she has the chance." He looks away thinking about his daughter Sara having to grow up from the cancer.

"It's not gonna be so bad Hop, I mean she's already grown up so much already since we first met her. Also summer is coming soon, she'll be able to see what it's gonna be like. She might even find out what kind of person she's going to be."

He sighs loudly. "They grow up so fast." He shakes his head wishing he could stop time and just enjoy their childhood longer.

"They really do." She thinks about Jonathan and Will when they were babies.

"Time just flies." Hopper days softly thinking of themselves when they were young. "When did we grow up?" He asks glancing towards her.

"I think it might have been a week before graduation." She furrows her brow thinking about her younger self and when she realized she was becoming a woman. "We both needed jobs." She adds playing with her jacket zipper.

"I didn't want to stay in this shit hole but I couldn't leave gramps." He says thinking about his grandpa. "I couldn't do that to him."

"He would have understood." She places her hand onto his. "He was a great man." She smiles.

"He was." He smiles to himself feeling tears begin to prickel his eyes. Clearing his throat he begins again. "You know he always told me that you wpuld nake a great wife."

"I wish he would have told Lonnie." She rolls her eyes.

"Not with that schmuck." He wants to say but keeps it inside. His grandpa always told him one day they would end up together.

Boy was he wrong.

Joyce looks to the ground kicking a rock to the side.

Did he mean with him? Did his grandpa mean she would end up with Jim?

She always wanted a chance with Hop, but sbr knew he only saw her as his friend.

"Joyce snap out of it, you just lost your boyfriend. The best man you've ever been with." She says to herself.

"Well if gramps would have known how Lonnie was going to treat you, he would have slapped him silly."

"Well damn, I wish I would have told him." She smiles knowing he would have fixed the whole problem.

"Well things always work out." He says with a shrug.

"Yes, Lonnie cheating on me was working things out."

"Not what I meant Joyce." He looks to her.

"I know." She nods. "I know, I'm sorry."

"If I would have known what he was going to-" he trails off. "I would have kicked his ass." He says feeling angry towards the man that hurt her.

"All the way from Chicago?" She asks with a chuckle.

"You should have called me." He says looking to her feeling a bit angry.

"Hop, I didn't have a number to reach you. You just left. You were gone. I know how it was with Lonnie but I didn't know then. I wish I did call you, I missed you and needed you." She says looking down towards the rock she kicked.

"I know Joyce, I know you did."

She moves away from the car and eyes the top of the trees from across the parking lot. She hugs herself to keep her warm from the chill of the night.

She feels her tears escape her eyes not realizing they were there. All those years ago she was afraid for her children and herself when it came to Lonnie, if Hop had been there things would have been so much different then the way things turned out.

He could hear she was crying, he didn't know how to fix something that happened so long ago. All he knew was if he could fix it he would.

"Did you know I took care of your grandpa until he took his last breath?" She asks him as she wipes the tears from her eyes.

"No, I didn't." He says sounding surprised.

"I called your aunt and she called your mom." She takes a deep breath thinking about the phone call she had to make and hoping they would get ahold of Jim for her.

"I didn't know." He answers in the quiet parking lot.

"I was supposed to go to the funeral too but Lonnie kept me home. Told me you were gonna be there and wanted to make sure I did other things instead of pay my respects." She turns to look to Hop.

His eyes filled with tears, he couldn't believe she was there the whole time.

His gramps was right about her, she would have been a great wife.

"Joyce, I don't know how to thank you." He says trying to clear his throat from his cracked voice.

"No need Hop. I loved him too." She answers wiping a tear from her cheek.

Hopper walks towards her with open arms. "Thank you Joyce." He says pulling her into his arms and resting his head upon hers. "Thank you for being there for him."

"It was no problem. He was my family too."

Hopper kisses the top of her head knowing his grandpa was right all along, she would make a perfect wife.

He knew now wasn't the time but eventually they would be together.  
She was gonna be his bride but for now he would wait.

He would always wait for her.